

Seventh Sunday of Easter: Psalm 51:1–12

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Psalm 119:67 (KJV) Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

I don't think anyone has heard this song. If you think you have, I think that's great. I certainly wouldn't want to argue with anyone.

Psalm 51:1-2 (KJV) To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. [2] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

What does this "wash me" tell you? You don't hear that prayed much.

Psalm 51:3 (KJV) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

We've co-opted the language. "What do you expect? I'm a sinner and totally depraved. That's just one of me." That is from hell. When you stop and listen to that kind of rhetoric, I hope it disgusts you.

Psalm 51:4 (KJV) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

When sin is exposed, people a lot of times still have an argument. "It's your fault. You're judging me." This is an amazing statement David makes.

You victims out there; you did do some things wrong, but surly there is someone you can blame. People who are into that, they are never happy, really. They don't prosper because it is hard to be in business if you still blame.

Psalm 51:5-6 (KJV) Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. [6] Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

You can outwardly quote scripture or books like OBATOTC, or any other book you want, but what is hidden in your heart? God sees the inner thing, and he desires truth. A little lie is darkness.

Psalm 51:7 (KJV) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Notice, he's come to a point in his life where he knows saying he's sorry and that he won't do it again, won't do. There is a godly sorrow and a godly repentance, and an ungodly sorrow and repentance which are saying, "I'm busted. Now everyone will know." If you're still walking before men, you can deceive men, but you can't deceive the Lord.

Psalm 51:7-9 (KJV) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. [8] Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. [9] Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

We've heard this and sung it, but it doesn't mean a thing until you stop and think about your utter inability to do anything about your heart.

Psalm 51:10 (KJV) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:14 (KJV) Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

The problem is; sins don't weigh that heavy on people. They are self-justifiers and they just push it out. When sin came in, it divided them and brought reproach on the whole church, Israel. David's sons turned against him (Absalom). What was the adulterer and murderer and liar say? Be good boys? Be good girls? You know what they're thinking if they hear that. What about you dad?

From now on I'm going to be good and turn over a new leaf. That tells me that your children have never heard the gospel. "Well, I've got 7-8 children." "Well, I've been in this church for over 30 years." I don't know if you've heard the gospel. "Well, I say things and repeat things." God doesn't want sacrifice. He doesn't want to hear those kinds of statements.

Psalm 51:17 (KJV) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

What will get you to cry out to God like David? Not you. The woman had a vexed daughter, grievously vexed. If you have those things in your life and you look at your children and where they are headed, you won't walk before men. You will cry out to God and say, "Have mercy on me." You won't be fighting it off. "Before I was afflicted I went astray." Many are the afflictions... The sons he loves he chastens...he rebukes.

But a man who is often reprov'd and hates it, where will he go?

The sacrifices of God are something that comes when you see the wages of your sin in people you love or even claim to love, and look at it. Let alone the years the locust have eaten from your life. God can restore the lost years. How does he do that? "I'm not sure I can believe that." You don't have to.

Some people really don't take God or the devil that serious. You're tricked. If you're walking before men you're already tricked. David finally came to the conclusion that "my best efforts weren't what you want Lord. My best confessions aren't what you want, Lord."

You might hear something today - the voice. Many are the afflictions. Who do you think every chapter in the Bible is about? Two people - you and Christ. "Wait a minute. That's about Pharaoh, not about me." How tough are you? Are you as tough as Pharaoh? God was toying with Pharaoh. God sent 10 plagues. After 9, Pharaoh thought he was still tough. God uses everything. When I start acting like Pharaoh, God is not worried. When I start to control anyone, or lord it over anyone, God is not worried. He knows what to do with Pharaohs. What about Nebuchadnezzar, didn't God raise him up? Yes. But he thought he was tough too. "This is Babylon I've created. Isn't it wonderful what I've created?" What have you created? "Well, I've done this wonderful thing." What has God created? There is a creator. When he creates something, it is marvelous. When I create something it's bad news.

So Nebuchadnezzar walks into the palace and he is immediately smitten. God uses these things as toys. Brother Job, look at that book. Chapter 1 they're having a meeting with God. Satan walks in, and immediately God says to him, "Did you notice _____." He comes to accuse. The irony of it all, the paradox of it all, is that he's God's accuser. A mighty fortress - this world is filled with devils. There are seeds sown by Satan, the wicked one, and they are his children and you're not his equal. That is such good news to hear. Every line of that song is pregnant with life. I used to hear, "Well, the church is supposed to be out there aggressive. I hate that song." Well, I love the fortress.

2 Chron. 20 - Who is that about, Jehoshaphat or you? Me. Who is coming to attack everything about you every day? Mt. Sir, the Ammonites, the Moabites? "This is too mighty for us. We don't know what to do, we're so overwhelmed."

Hear my Cry, Oh God, attend unto my prayer. From the ends of the earth I will cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed. That is the only time you're going to cry out to God; when you're heart is overwhelmed and you've finally come to the end of your strength. For years Nebuchadnezzar ate grass, and then he gave glory to God, and his counselors, his gifts, were given back to him. God insists on putting gifts in weird, unattractive packages.

When my heart is overwhelmed - that is when David sees his sin. He cries out, "I can't do this. Create in me." God can create even in you, a clean heart.

This war, this world with devils filled this accusing world that you live in, has a daily battle. "Wait a minute. I'm saved. Go away Moses." Everything that comes against you every day is the law, the law that you broke. You should hear that. The law uncovers your sin so that you're led to the gospel that fulfills the law. Although some people have a real problem with that. They want to do away with the law. It would be like God telling Abraham, "Take your son, your only son." Talk about the insanity, the foolishness of God. Take now your son, your only son, and take him up Mt. Mariah, and offer him as a sacrifice. The enemy is subtle; he will tell you the sacrifice has already been made. Without law, you'll have no gospel. God gives us gifts, in the civil realm. You don't have to worry about politics because as long as money is running things morality will be upheld.

But if your house is empty, seven more will come back. Many people keep their house empty. They disregard the mutual conversation and the grace that comes out of it until they are made poor. Until you're humble, God is resisting you and letting you think you're strong. How can you get out of Pharaoh's debt system today? How could you be in this world and not of it, not of the slavery of this world? The Lord is mighty, is mighty in battle. The battle is the Lord's. You will not need to fight this battle. "What do you mean? On Monday I need to get up." I mean that you're mind will be renewed if you think like that.

The mind if Christ is to empty yourself of reputation. If you're still trying to make a name, let me tell you what will happen to you. You've been sneaking around your whole life relying on your craftiness, your reasoning, your logic, your prowess, your strength, basically. Jacob, Laban was just the beginning for you. It started in the womb when you kicked your mother.

Jacob comes to Jabbac and wrestles with the angel. He is finally brought to something the Bible calls "alone." You can prolong this as much as you want. He's brought to God. "What is your name?" That's the issue. "My name? Well, I've always tried my best. I'll admit I've missed this and that. I'm a diligent person." How do you want to be perceived by this world? God will write the Father's name in those that overcome with faith. First, you have to admit, like Jacob did finally, to where he was almost crippled. He wouldn't let go, would he. Some days I feel crippled, but I won't let go. Despairing is not being crippled, its strength, argument, reason. David came to the end. He saw what his sin did to his children, and it didn't weight light on him either.

The problem in this church is that sin weighs very lightly because people don't want to leave some things. They don't know that god is no one to be messed with, and neither is the devil. If you allow darkness in your mind, and do sneaky things in darkness, you won't get away with it. Joseph's brothers thought they had gotten away with it but they didn't. God made it all pointless.

The mind if Christ is an emptying mind. It is not a possessive mind. It is continually flowing out, spontaneity of outflow. The Spirit of the Lord gets around the desert and it blossoms. There are some deserts that like it that way. They are nomadic tribes, you could say.

Paul said he counted it all loss.

Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.

You know the story.

Luther said you experience this. He was not interested in scholasticism. I wish some young men here really wanted to be theologians; women also. Experiencing the scripture, experiencing scripture, is what Luther was into.

You want to see everything about you blossom as water in a desert? What is in your mouth? What is spoken in your home? Is there emptiness? They'll be back, seven more of them. Is your house filled with secrets - you wouldn't really want people to know the truth? There's nothing to hide.

Psalm 34:1-2 (KJV) A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually

be in my mouth. [2] My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

Those that have been humbled of the lord will be glad. What humbles us? Let's just say the Lord does.

Psalm 34:3-4 (KJV) O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. [4] I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Has he delivered you from all your fears today? He will.

Psalm 34:6 (KJV) This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Children are great - they make you poor. They always need shoes. Now school is coming.

Psalm 34:13 (KJV) Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Sometime I hear a little sarcasm or scorn in their speech. You ought to tell them.

Psalm 34:14 (KJV) Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

Psalm 34:16-17 (KJV) The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. [17] The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

Psalm 34:19 (KJV) Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

What is your boast in? God gave his son to you, to me, to us. Is that your boast? Paul said he was a debtor to all men.

Ephes. 6:10-11 (KJV) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. [11] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Christians, we're in a war. It goes on to say what the armor is. It also says that God is not mocked. Do not believe people who tell you that you won't reap what you sow in this life. Ultimately, God has finished the work. But we're still in between, in the here and now.

What should we do about all this?

Jeremiah is all about us.

Jeremiah 29:10-13 (KJV) For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. [11] For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. [12] Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. [13] And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

You're to do the law with all your guts, as Steven Hein says. Not half-hearted, "I love my neighbor. I love my wife. I love my children." How many of you wives like it when your husband loves you half-heartedly?

Let no man deceive you with vain words.

Ephes. 5:3-6 (KJV) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; [4] Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. [5] For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. [6] Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

If a person is thinking evil thoughts they're already delivered over to Satan and are in darkness. They have their reward already. Not even coveting - they got more than me. This proves you don't know you've got Christ. In Him are all things.

Get rid of that if you have any foolish talking.

Ephes. 5:5 (KJV) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Idols are concepts, according to Luther - concepts people dwell on in their mind. No one is going out making a mud idol today. The Church of Rome - no graven images was taken out of the 4th and 5th commandments because they wanted to have graven images.

Ephes. 5:6 (KJV) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

What is the ultimate disobedience? Basically, it's the pride of unbelief. Not trusting in God's Word, but in your own reason or your own strength. Trusting in the whole Word of God. You love his Word. What you love you like to be with, don't you. Meditate day and night, does not mean what we think. It means to think about it, but also to speak it. In Hebrew, if you love someone what do you do? You start talking about them. He is the Word of God. If you don't love him, you're going to learn to love him. If you don't love him, you'll love other things that will destroy you. You'll have no escape.

When your sons ask you what meaneth these things. You tell your children you were slaves in Egypt and had no way of getting out of your natural reasoning, of not being an idolater, attempting like the rest of the world to be somebody. Instead of receiving your identity from God, go about getting the approval of men. You flatter, and still think you have to use people to get what you want. It's a waste of time. God will provide all you need.

The ultimate sin is really pride and unbelief. But believe what? What are you asking me to believe? Jesus Christ. Some of you need to understand that we don't walk by sight - human reasoning. We are nonsensical people. We believe in things not seen, like miracles. We look upon things not seen, for the things seen are temporal but the things not seen are eternal. We look to Jesus who is the author and finisher. How many of you look to yourself to finish your faith? You've already lost and you'll get beat up again, doing things. That doesn't work out too good, we'll come to see.

It is His commandment that you love one another, but you immediately confess your utter inability to do that, as yourself. You're to love your neighbor as yourself, and not one person here has ever done it. There is only one who loves his neighbor, and that is Christ. But if you don't like him, what does the scripture say about him? He is despised. When do you despise him? When he comes, maybe threatening one of your gods, or maybe he comes with a face of law, conviction. Did you know that the Holy Spirit is always convicting us of sin? He comes. The first thing the Spirit does is to convict the world, the world in me, that other one, of sin. Doesn't it ever lighten up? Yes, when I, by the mercy of God, receive his grace.

Let's turn to another Psalm we've never heard - Psalm 107.

Job had a problem with God. His friends' theology was wrong too. But after all was said and done, the most righteous man in town, the one God bragged about to the sons of God and to the devil, Satan, who said Job was like all the rest and if God took his blessing from Job he'd

curse you, and God said go ahead, but don't touch is flesh. Job went home, and a whirlwind came and everything was gone except his wife. He still did not curse God. Then God gave Satan permission to touch his flesh. Job still doesn't curse God. When you read the book of job, it's about you. His problem was, he didn't love the Lord. He wanted to keep God out, like Martha. God was a threat. He knew some things about God. To some degree he loved the Lord, more than others, relatively speaking. But he had a righteousness of his own which is of the law, which every man does, though he may not be aware of it. If you see a relative of yours doing something they shouldn't your righteous indignation comes to the surface. That should show you something about yourself. On the other hand, if you're a husband, you need to reprove that and take care of it. You can't really preach gospel where there is an unrepentant heart. All that heart gets is law.

At the end of Job's trial with God, he wanted an explanation - to pierce the veil - to know why it had happened to him when he'd been so good. "Where were you, God said, when I set the stars? Besides, if you're so bad, can you mess with Leviathan, the sea monster, the dragon with armor?" Who is Leviathan? Satan. You think you're match for him? If you're going to dine with darkness, your own darkness... "Well, if people knew about me, they'd hate me." They already know about you if they have the HG. The only reason they don't tell you is because there's not point in it because you really don't want to hear. Besides, it may not be their time. "How are my kids doing in school?" Children don't look so innocent now. This is also about your hidden sin, your darkness, you dishonoring your parents, and you continually being curved in on yourself. You have your reward. God may let you keep doing it another 10 years, until finally, it's just out there. You finally did what you've been harboring in your heart, and now everyone sees it. You can't hide it.

Psalms 107:5-6 (KJV) Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. [6] Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Who cries to the Lord? Anyone whose heart is overwhelmed. Anyone that loves their children. They have a relationship with God and they walk before God and not men. If you love your wife you'll walk before God and not men. You have to understand how the Lord works. Sometimes he gives you a lot of rope.

Psalms 107:7-9 (KJV) And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. [8] Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful

works to the children of men! [9] For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst. No hunger, no thirst, no blessed.

Psalm 107:10-11 (KJV) Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; [11] Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

Ever known anyone like that?

Psalm 107:11-12 (KJV)

Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: [12] Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.

Oh, oh! Bad God. He is bad. In fact, let me tell you how bad he is. He allows people to die of cancer. He allows children to die. I won't be there in your death for you, and you for me.

Prepare that death would have no dominion over you and you would not fear death.

Psalm 107:13 (KJV) Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

When they're brought down they cried to the Lord. Take heed if you think you stand, least you fall. Great was the fall of the house.

Some people are so busy, and like it that way, so they don't have to think about God. If Christ, the Living Word shows up in you, you will be an interruption, and you'll know it. Who is Martha? You, me, the church - half of her.

Psalm 107:14-15 (KJV) He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. [15] Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psalm 107:17 (KJV) Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

Sinners - fools. There is so much in this. There is a continual back and forth. They end up in a wilderness, fearful, filled with cares, taking thought for their lives, for tomorrow and how

they're going to look - making sure they make a good image - vanity.

Psalm 107:43 (KJV) Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Observe - to look at - have you exhausted the meaning of it. What does it do? To regard something, see and know, keep and preserve. Practice and learn from.

Who is wise, who will observe, who will watch, who will learn from this story? You don't believe that you're going to end up in a desert and that is why you're spaced out, that your life can go on being one of cheeseburgers. Woody Allen, he was thinking of committing suicide, and then he remembered this delicatessen that had these amazing Corned Beef sandwiches.

I'm talking about something - life eternal.

Psalm 107:43 (KJV) Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

They will understand the covenant of God that he has made with the church. He says some things to the church. Some people take things like, "I'll never leave you or forsake you," they think they can keep on sinning. The un-preached God in your house is hardly distinguishable from the devil. He's a god that kills. He's a god that makes poor. Anyone poor today and can't pay your bills? Who are you getting help from? Who are you talking to? "Don't make my problem worse by telling me about it. I feel bad enough." You don't feel bad at all.

God gives grace to the humble.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Psalm 73 - I've been chastened every morning. And I was envious of the people who don't have any problems, and aren't bothered by their sins or by walking before men and not God. I got envious of them, and then I went into the temple, the church, I saw how foolish I was an ignorant. I was a beast before thee.

God gives grace to the humble.

That is all law.

What is then our life, since that's law?

Romans 5:1-3 (KJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: [2] By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

You glory in tribulations? Anfechtung means tribulations. Daily anfechtung is coming your way, behind that is the devil. But only until the Lord comes and does away with it. Tomorrow you will wake up and you'll forget and it won't take that long. It's like the slough of despondency. You try to put God's good word in it and it is just a waste, unless the HG is there. Or put it like this; it's manna. By tomorrow morning it will turn into worms and maggots, particularly when men co-opt it, unless the HG, unless there's a man in this church who cries out, "Son of David! Have mercy on me!" You're brought to that.

Romans 5:3-5 (KJV) And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [4] And patience, experience; and experience, hope: [5] And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Hope in whom? Not the person you've hoped in your whole life. It's hope in Christ. Anyone who is still trying to make a name, still cruising through the hamburger stand with your beautiful hair blowing... Tell the truth, girls! You've already been had. Boys! You're still ashamed. Don't worry; God has a thing called tribulation. I'm not even talking to anyone under 18, 19, or 23.

Romans 6:1 (KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? "I've got some Reformation theology now and I can continue in sin." Here's the big argument and I don't know if this will make any sense to you.

Col. 3:1-2 (KJV) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. [2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Does this mean metaphysical things above? No. Christ and your neighbor.

Here's the argument: Col. 3:3 (KJV) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Can you remember that? Ye are dead. What does that mean? It means this; it means that the Christian life and this is the Christian life right here, by the mercy of God, by the grace of

God you've been crucified with Christ in God, and it is no longer you who live, no matter how long you've sung this - and it is true. What does it mean if you're dead? Let me say this:

In Luther's theology the Christian life is passive. It means your life is passive. I looked that word up and in the Latin definitions, and it's interesting for you English student, noting a voice, a grammatical voice, the infliction of the verb. Namely, he, she, or it is carried. Passive means he, she, or it is carried, affected by some external force. You're dead. The life you now live you live by the faith of the son of God that died for you, and gave him for you. This has the greatest implications of anything you're ever going to hear. Being the object of the action rather than the subject, or rather than the cause of the action, you are the object of the action. As opposed to acting, it is reception or receiving as characterized by receiving. You're produced or caused by some external agency, receiving, submitting, enduring, without resistance. Passive. That does not mean that you're inert, although some definitions would seem to indicate that. There is no one more active in the world than a Christ. They are dead and it is not them that are acting, but Christ. The passive life is very active. The new creation is very active, but it is Christ.

It is God that worketh in you; it is God that worketh in you because it couldn't be you. It is God in you that fulfills the law, that loves your neighbor, that doesn't think evil. It is God in you - Christ in you, the hope of glory. The old man can never glorify God because he wants to do things to bring glory to himself. But when you're dead, what can you do? You can - he that is dead is freed from the law. What do you mean we're free from the law, that's all we've heard today? The old creation will always be under the law, but we don't look to that, we look to Christ. There's no point in challenging me. That won't help. That just puts more death on your children. Go ahead though. When will your sins weigh on you? "Son of David, have mercy on me. I've got a vexed son. He can't even talk. He's fearful. He's got a dirty little mind. He doesn't go near any Word of God." "Well it's not my fault." Yeah it is! Blame me!

Isa 28 -

If God weighs lightly on you; don't worry.

Isaiah 28:14 (KJV) Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 28:14-15 (KJV) Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. [15] Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death,

and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

We're going to avoid affliction, tribulation and poverty. The Lord kills and makes alive. The Lord makes poor and makes rich. You'll not hear about this from the television. In their hearts they were liars.

Isaiah 28:15-16 (KJV) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

[16] Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

The builders reject this stone all the time. He is despised and rejected. When did you despise him?

Isaiah 28:21-22 (KJV) For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. [22] Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

Isaiah 28:23 (KJV) Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

God's strange work his alien work, is anfechtung. There's no escape. Behind the anfechtung is he that worketh in you, if that is what you need. You can't even believe or receive Christ. All you can do is say, "Forgive me, Lord, as I forgive others."

The passive life, the Christian lives in a passiveness. This means that god is the active subject, and the Christian is the object. It is passive in the sense that it suffers and undergoes God's work and passively receives God's work.

Reckon yourselves dead. .

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What is meant by suffering here? It seems obvious that Luther does not mean just physical pain. He himself experienced much excruciating pain during his life, but never to my knowledge does he identify that pain with the suffering worked by the cross or use it to make

claims for himself as a sufferer. For Luther the sufferings of the spirit, the pangs of conscience (If you don't have pangs of conscience, you might want to consider that you're a sociopath. If someone is asked are you forgiven, and they say "I hope so." More law - reprove them), the terrors of temptation (Anfechtungen), were always more agonizing and serious than the physical pain he also knew well. Even physical death, though heartrending enough for loved ones, was a far lesser matter than the kind of death experienced when the wrath of God assaults the sinner.

So the suffering Luther has in mind first and foremost is the result of God's operation on the sinner. One can find reference to that throughout his writings. The suffering Luther has in mind is something God inflicts on us just by virtue of the fact that he moves against the presumption of our works. He is out to do it all. We suffer this unilateral action of God. We suffer because we don't like it. We don't like to be put out of control. It means that we are rendered totally passive by the divine operation through the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

"Passive" has, of course, become something of a bad word in contemporary speech. It is taken to mean lack of assertiveness, lack of motivation, lack of care, extreme lassitude. But we should recall that it comes from the same root as "passion" and means literally the same thing as suffering – as in "the passion of our Lord." Luther used it constantly to describe the proper disposition of the sinner to the grace of God. Precisely because the sinner has taken up an active position in relation to God's activity on the basis of works, God's action over against the sinner can only result in suffering. The sinner I therefore rendered absolutely passive, put totally out of commission, we might say today. The sinner can only suffer the divine action.

Psalms 107 - all these things happened, and then they cried out. They hardened their hearts

Luther: "The soul is taken hold of [by the pure Word of God] and does not take hold of anything itself; that is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations, and is taken away by the Word...into the wilderness...to invisible things, into the vineyard, and into the marriage chamber. But this leading, this taking away, and this stripping, miserably tortures [the soul].

How many of you are under God's divine operation today. Don't think it strange. God's ways are different, aren't they?

That is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations, and is taken away by the Word...into the wilderness...to invisible things, into

the vineyard, and into the marriage chamber. But this leading, this taking away, and this stripping, miserably tortures [the soul].

What' you're stripping me of that now, of this now, again today? How many of you have been stripped of all you knew yet? How many of you have been stripped of valuing what you knew? If you love someone you'll be stripped from what you know of how they are, even. If you're blaming, you need to be stripped of blame. "Yeah. It's their fault I'm that way." "Harold, try growing up!" You could have done works in your parents. They're still here, aren't they? It isn't easy.

That is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations,

What's in there? He is there - the groom - and he's got things for the bride.

But this leading, this taking away, and this stripping, miserably tortures [the soul]. For it is a hard path to walk in,

If your parents are still here walking this path, you ought to give thanks to God.

For it is a hard path to walk in, and a straight and narrow way, to leave all visible things, to be stripped of all natural senses and ideas, and to be led out of al those things to which we have been accustomed; this, indeed, is to die, and to descend into hell.

That is what dying is. Your natural gifts, abilities and knowledge.

this, indeed, is to die, and to descend into hell. To experience hell.

The very indignation and resentment we harbor and/or express when we come up against the absolutely sovereign action of God in these matters indicates the truth of what is being said.

The anger and the indignation is the beginning of the suffering! Like Job we protest against God. Why? Because in actual suffering all theorizing is over. One enters into contention with God.

One thing the church in America has lost is the prayer of complaint. Get it out there! Complaint is great prayer. Not complaining to your wife - it's complaining to God. Why? Reb Tivia knew what was behind everything, at least. He reasoned it out. If there's any mischief being played on you today, it could be the devil. Satan is God's servant.

One enters into contention with God. Precisely in his rash protest over his suffering Job unwittingly speaks the truth about God. In his suffering he cries out to God as the ultimate answer to it all. As with job, it is only through suffering that sinners come to know and speak such truth. As inveterate theologians of glory, we are bound to shy away from such truth and, like job's friends, try to make excuses for God. We adjust our doctrine of God to fit our glory projects.

So God declares (Job 42:7-9) that Jo had spoken the truth, terrifying as it was and is. Job now sees that in the voice of his suffering he had unwittingly spoken the truth, and he is terrified by it: "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know (42:3). Job sees that through suffering the truth had literally been wrung out of him. He sees where previously he had heard and complained. He thus despises himself and repents in dust and ashes."

So, are you suffering the work of God today, and every day? The alien work of God? God kills the old Adam and gives him a new heart and causes Adam to hear and believe. People who believe enter into God's rest, and have ceased from their work. Jesus Christ is now working in them. If you need a little *anfechtung*, you can count of God and you might have to suffer that unilateral action. On the other hand, Christ has shed abroad in your heart his love. This is daily. Tomorrow you will get up and all it will be for you is Monday, until you're baptized, or until this word, or the *anfechtung* comes upon you. "Well, I know how to get around this problem and that problem." Good.

He gives you a new heart, a new spirit, and new mind. Christian righteousness is passive, and is entirely opposed to the world's righteousness which is active. We can only receive the righteousness of God. We can't earn it. We do not work, but let another work in us.

We do not work, but let another work in us. I'll say it again; We do not work, but let another work in us and through us. We are no longer the subject we've been talking about our whole life. Now we are the object of God's action and now he is the only subject worthy of talk. He is the initiator of all the action, the one who fulfills every word, and the one who is active in the verbs - do this and do that. When you read Scripture through the eyes of law and gospel, you'll see that it is glorious. This is right down to the gut level - where we live. We receive this.

We let another work in us, namely God. This cannot be understood by the world. They don't have the grammar to understand this. God hides things from the wise. They're too wise to get

this. This is foolishness. It is the preaching of the cross. You are dead. Now that you're dead, what do you want to do? You can't even want. How can I want to do good or bad if I'm dead? Reckon yourselves dead to sin but alive to Christ. "Well, I just got angry and kicked my dog." Confess it and move on. "God you're right in your judgment, and your anfechtung, in my life. But I don't want to be left alone."

Why did they wander in the desert for 40 years? God wanted to show them what was in their hearts. They never would have believed it in 20 years. You still hope in your own heart? How many years is it going to take?

We receive this righteousness. We do not work but let another work in us. It is he that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. His pleasure is much better for you than yours. Don't expect the world...wise and prudent The wise and prudent only want to make something of themselves, self-made people. So the *vita passiva*.

Faith is the victory.

Trying hard isn't not what we're into. Not at all. We are into being dead, not trying to get dead - being dead.

By the way, even faith is total gift. How do you know? It comes by hearing. Romans 10:17 (KJV)

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us all the time.

When you read Psalm 107, or you read the history of Israel and their suffering, and read about David, realize that they've gone ahead of you. You may not have to experience that. God does give back the years the locust ate. Faith. Faith - that gift. We live entirely in that gift. How did you get faith? Hearing. How did you hear? A voice outside of me. What caused your hear to hear? Tribulation - suffering the work of God. Is God working in you today? Will he work in you tomorrow? Will you suffer his working in you? Why is it called suffering? It is passion - passive. Something outside of you comes in - God's work. Isn't that amazing?

Our suffering, think it not strange. God is conforming you to His image. You know what? There is progress - not total progress in this life. We will always have a flesh, but where you're going - heaven - it's our home. In the meantime, while we're here, one of the sufferings that is so wonderful... Imagine saying, "We boast and glory in our tribulation because we know what

it works." Israel got thirsty in the wilderness, and God did it. Why? To show them what was in their hearts. They had just seen this great miracle. They thought Pharaoh was this great dude. He had chariots and horses and 100,000 soldiers, and was pretty heavy. He did put up with 9 plagues. How heavy do you think you want to be when you can just, through faith, say, "Amen, Lord Jesus. Come to me. Maranatha me, right now. Let the explosion start in my heart. Let the abundance flow out. Let Christ flow out. Let every heart receive. Let every heart prepare room through the mercy and grace of God." By the way, this is what he is doing, and he is answering your prayers. We are not active in this. That the city set on the hill, the righteousness of God would be seen in the entire world.

Luther's favorite saying - Little flock. He saw enough of the big administration - management - control - works. So make sure that works follow you wherever you go, right? Whose works will they be? His works. You can pretend, but you can't trick the Lord. Jacob wasn't done with him at Jabback, because Jacob wasn't done. He was still playing games, holding onto Benjamin. God wants everything, and he's serious about that. You can't do it. Here's the marvelous thing: When the law tells you to do this, you are to immediately confess your utter inability to do it, believe Christ has already done it, and that it is finished. What more do you want than that? Maybe you could find a better deal somewhere else. Just because you're not hearing it doesn't mean it is not yours.

Because of what Christ has done. I'm declaring to you the forgiveness of all of your sins. I pray to God that you would receive it and not try to do anything about it. I forgive you all of your sins, in the name of Jesus, not in my name. There is not one sin that you have, that Christ hasn't cleansed.

Here's the tragedy, before you go: The blood of the Lamb takes away the sins of the whole world. Let Him tell people, speak the gospel, let the world know, through you, through your tongue. He will meet your neighbor's ultimate need through your tongue, but it will be his gospel.

AMEN

Sermon Notes – Don O'Connor – 8/17/08

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)

Psalm 119:67 (KJV) Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

I don't think anyone has heard this song. If you think you have, I think that's great. I certainly wouldn't want to argue with anyone.

Psalm 51:1-2 (KJV) To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. [2] Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

What does this "wash me" tell you? You don't hear that prayed much.

Psalm 51:3 (KJV) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

We've co-opted the language. "What do you expect? I'm a sinner and totally depraved. That's just one of me." That is from hell. When you stop and listen to that kind of rhetoric, I hope it disgusts you.

Psalm 51:4 (KJV) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

When sin is exposed, people a lot of times still have an argument. "It's your fault. You're judging me." This is an amazing statement David makes.

You victims out there; you did do some things wrong, but surely there is someone you can blame, isn't there? People who are into that, they are never happy, really. They don't prosper because it is hard to be in business if you still blame.

Psalm 51:5-6 (KJV) Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. [6] Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

You can outwardly quote Scripture or books like On Being a Theologian of the Cross, or any other book you want, but what is hidden in your heart? God sees the inner thing, and he desires truth in the inward part. A little lie is darkness.

Psalm 51:7 (KJV) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Notice, he's come to a point in his life where he knows saying he's sorry and that he won't do it again, won't do. There is a Godly sorrow and a Godly repentance, and an ungodly sorrow and repentance which are saying, "I'm busted. Now everyone will know." If you're still walking before men, you can deceive men but you can't deceive the Lord.

Psalm 51:7-9 (KJV) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. [8] Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. [9] Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

We've heard this and sung it, but it doesn't mean a thing until you stop and think about your utter inability to do anything about your heart.

Psalm 51:10 (KJV) Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51:14 (KJV) Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

The problem is; sins don't weigh that heavy on people. They are self-justifiers and they just push it out. When sin came in, it divided them and brought reproach on the whole church, Israel. David's sons turned against him (Absalom). What does the adulterer and murderer and liar say? Be good boys? Be good girls? You know what they're thinking if they hear that. What about you dad? "From now on I'm going to be good and turn over a new leaf." That tells me that your children have never heard the gospel. "Well, I've got 7-8 children." "Well, I've been in this church for over 30 years." I don't know if you've heard the gospel. "Well, I say things and repeat things." God doesn't want sacrifice. He doesn't want to hear those kinds of statements.

Psalm 51:17 (KJV) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

What will get you to cry out to God like David? Not you. The woman had a vexed daughter; grievously vexed. If you have those things in your life and you look at your children and where they are headed, you won't walk before men. You will cry out to God and say, "Have mercy on me." You won't be fighting it off. "Before I was afflicted I went astray."

Psalm 34:19 (KJV) Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

Proverbs 3:11-12 (KJV) My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: [12] For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

But a man who is often reprov'd and hates it, where will he go?

The sacrifices of God are something that comes when you see the wages of your sin in people you love or even claim to love, and look at it, let alone the years the locust have eaten from your life. God can restore the lost years. How does he do that? "I'm not sure I can believe that." You don't have to.

Some people really don't take God or the devil that serious. You're tricked. If you're walking before men you're already tricked. David finally came to the conclusion, "My best efforts weren't what you want Lord. My best confessions aren't what you want, Lord."

You might hear something today - the voice. Many are the afflictions... Who do you think every chapter in the Bible is about? Two people - you and Christ. "Wait a minute. That's about Pharaoh, not about me." How tough are you? Are you as tough as Pharaoh? God was toying with Pharaoh. God sent 10 plagues. After 9, Pharaoh thought he was still tough. God uses everything. When I start acting like Pharaoh, God is not worried. When I start to control anyone, or lord it over anyone, God is not worried. He knows what to do with Pharaohs. "What about Nebuchadnezzar, didn't God raise him up?" Yes. But he thought he was tough too. "This is Babylon I've created. Isn't it wonderful what I've created?" What have you created? "Well, I've done this wonderful thing." What has God created? There is a creator. When he creates something, it is marvelous. When I create something its bad news.

So Nebuchadnezzar walks into the palace and he is immediately smitten. God uses these things as toys. Brother Job; look at that book. Chapter 1 they're having a meeting with God. Satan walks in, and immediately God says to him, "Did you notice _____ (fill in the blank)." Satan comes to accuse. The irony of it all, the paradox of it all, is that he is God's accuser. A mighty fortress has a line that says "this world with devils filled." This world is filled with devils. There are seeds sown by Satan, the wicked one, and they are his children and you're not his equal. That is such good news to hear. Every line of that song is pregnant with life. I used to hear, "Well, the church is supposed to be out there being aggressive. I hate that song." Well, I love the fortress.

2 Chron. 20 - Who is that about, Jehoshaphat or you? Me. Who is coming to attack everything about you every day? Mt. Seir, the Ammonites, the Moabites? "This is too mighty for us. We don't know what to do, we're so overwhelmed."

Psalms 61:1-2 (KJV) To the chief Musician upon Neginah, A Psalm of David. Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. [2] From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

That is the only time you're going to cry out to God - when your heart is overwhelmed and you've finally come to the end of your strength. For years Nebuchadnezzar ate grass, and then he gave glory to God, and his counselors, his gifts, were given back to him. God insists on putting gifts in weird, unattractive packages.

"When my heart is overwhelmed;" that is, when David sees his sin, he cries out, "I can't do this. Create in me." God can create even in you, a clean heart.

This war, this world with devils filled - this accusing world that you live in, is a daily battle. "Wait a minute. I'm saved. Go away Moses." Everything that comes against you every day is the law, the law that you broke. You should hear that. The law uncovers your sin so that you're led to the gospel that fulfills the law. Although some people have a real problem with that. They want to do away with the law. It would be like God telling Abraham, "Take your son, your only son..." Talk about the insanity, the foolishness of God. Take now your son, your only son, and take him up Mt. Mariah, and offer him as a sacrifice. The enemy is subtle; he will tell you the sacrifice has already been made. Without law, you'll have no gospel. God gives us gifts, in the civil realm. You don't have to worry about politics because as long as money is running things morality will be upheld.

But if your house is empty, seven more will come back. Many people keep their house empty. They disregard the mutual conversation and the grace that comes out of it until they are made poor. Until you're humble, God is resisting you and letting you think you're strong.

How can you get out of Pharaoh's debt system today? How could you be in this world and not of it, not of the slavery of this world? The Lord is mighty, is mighty in battle. The battle is the Lord's. You will not need to fight this battle. "What do you mean? On Monday I need to get up." I mean that your mind will be renewed if you think like that. The mind of Christ is to empty yourself of reputation. You're still trying to make a name. You've been sneaking around your whole life relying on your craftiness, your reasoning, your logic, your prowess, your

strength, basically. Jacob, Laban was just the beginning for you. It started in the womb when you kicked your mother.

Jacob comes to Jabbok and wrestles with the angel. He is finally brought to something the Bible calls "alone." You can prolong this as much as you want. He's brought to God. "What is your name?" That's the issue. "My name? Well, I've always tried my best. I'll admit I've missed this and that. I'm a diligent person." How do you want to be perceived by this world? God will write the Father's name in those that overcome with faith (Rev. 3:12). First, you have to admit, like Jacob finally did, to where he was almost crippled. He wouldn't let go. Some days I feel crippled, but I won't let go. Despairing is not being crippled, it's strength, it's an argument - reason. David came to the end. He saw what his sin did to his children, and it didn't weight light on him either.

The problem in this church is that sin weighs very lightly because people don't want to leave some things. They don't know that God is no one to be messed with, and neither is the devil. If you allow darkness in your mind, and do sneaky things in darkness, you won't get away with it. Joseph's brothers thought they had gotten away with it but they hadn't. God made it all pointless.

The mind if Christ is an emptying mind. It is not a possessive mind. It is continually flowing out. There is spontaneity of outflow. The Spirit of the Lord gets around the desert and it blossoms. There are some deserts that like it that way. They are nomadic tribes, you could say.

Philip. 3:7 (KJV) But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Philip. 2:5 (KJV) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

You know the story.

Luther said you experience the Word. He was not interested in scholasticism. I wish some young men here really wanted to be theologians; women also. Experiencing the scripture, experiencing scripture, is what Luther was into.

You want to see everything about you blossom as water in a desert? What is in your mouth? What is spoken in your home? Is there emptiness? They'll be back, seven more of them. Is your house filled with secrets - you wouldn't really want people to know the truth? There's nothing to hide.

Psalm 34:1-2 (KJV) A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. [2] My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

Those that have been humbled of the Lord will be glad. What humbles us? Let's just say the Lord does.

Psalm 34:3-4 (KJV) O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. [4] I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Has he delivered you from all your fears today? He will.

Psalm 34:6 (KJV) This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Children are great. They make you poor. They always need shoes. Now school is coming.

Psalm 34:13 (KJV) Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Sometime I hear a little sarcasm or scorn in your children's speech. You ought to tell them.

Psalm 34:14 (KJV) Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

Psalm 34:16-17 (KJV) The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. [17] The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

Psalm 34:19 (KJV) Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

What are you boasting in? God gave his Son to you, to me, to us. Is that your boast? Paul said he was a debtor to all men.

Ephes. 6:10-11 (KJV) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. [11] Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Christians, we're in a war. It goes on to say what the armor is. It also says that God is not mocked. Do not believe people who tell you that you won't reap what you sow in this life. Ultimately, God has finished the work, but we're still in between, in the here and now.

What should we do about all this?

Jeremiah is all about us.

Jeremiah 29:10-13 (KJV) For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. [11] For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. [12] Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. [13] And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

You're to do the law with all your guts, as Steven Hein says. Not half-hearted, "I love my neighbor. I love my wife. I love my children." How many of you wives like it when your husband loves you half-heartedly?

Let no man deceive you with vain words.

Ephes. 5:3-6 (KJV) But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; [4] Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. [5] For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. [6] Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

If a person is thinking evil thoughts they're already delivered over to Satan and are in darkness. They have their reward already. Not even coveting; "They got more than me." This proves you don't know you've got Christ. In Him are all things.

Get rid of that if you have any foolish talking.

Ephes. 5:5 (KJV) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Idols are concepts, according to Luther - concepts people dwell on in their mind. No one is going around making a mud idol today. The Church of Rome - no graven images was taken out of the 4th and 5th commandments because they wanted to have graven images.

Ephes. 5:6 (KJV) Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

What is the ultimate disobedience? Basically, it's the pride of unbelief - not trusting in God's Word, but in your own reason or your own strength. We are to trust in the whole Word of God. You love his Word. What you love you like to be with, don't you. Meditate day and night, does not mean what we think it means; it means to think about it, but also to speak it. In Hebrew, if you love someone what do you do? You start talking about them. He is the Word of God. If you don't love Him, you're going to learn to love Him. If you don't love Him, you'll love other things that will destroy you. You'll have no escape.

When your sons ask you what meaneth these things you're to tell your children you were slaves in Egypt and had no way of getting out of your natural reasoning, no way out of not being an idolater, no way out of attempting like the rest of the world to be somebody. Instead of receiving your identity from God, you go about getting the approval of men. You flatter, and still think you have to use people to get what you want. It's a waste of time. God will provide all you need.

The ultimate sin is really pride and unbelief. But believe what? What are you asking me to believe? Jesus Christ. Some of you need to understand that we don't walk by sight - human reasoning. We are nonsensical people. We believe in things not seen, things like miracles. We look upon things not seen, for the things seen are temporal but the things not seen are eternal. We look to Jesus who is the author and finisher. How many of you look to yourself to finish your faith? You've already lost and you'll get beat up again, doing things. That doesn't work out too good, we'll come to see.

It is His commandment that you love one another, but you immediately confess your utter inability to do that, as yourself. You're to love your neighbor as yourself, and not one person here has ever done it. There is only one who loves his neighbor and that is Christ. But if you don't like Him, what does the scripture say about him? He is despised. When do you despise Him? When He comes, may threaten one of your gods, or maybe He comes with a face of law, conviction. Did you know that the Holy Ghost is always convicting us of sin? The first thing the Spirit does when He comes is to convict the world, the world in me, that other one, of sin. Doesn't it ever lighten up? I can, by the mercy of God, receive His grace.

Job had a problem with God. His friends' theology was wrong too. He was most righteous man in town, the one God bragged about to the Sons of God and to the devil, Satan. Satan said to God that Job was like all the rest and if God took his blessing from Job he would curse Him. God said "Go ahead. But don't touch is flesh." Job went home, and a whirlwind came and everything was gone except his wife. He still did not curse God. Then God gave Satan permission to touch his flesh. Job still doesn't curse God. When you read the book of job, it's about you. His problem was, he didn't love the Lord. He wanted to keep God out, like Martha. God was a threat. He knew some things about God. To some degree he loved the Lord, more than others, relatively speaking. But he had a righteousness of his own which is of the law, which every man does, though he may not be aware of it. If you see a relative of yours doing something they shouldn't your righteous indignation comes to the surface. That should show you something about yourself. On the other hand, if you're a husband, you need to reprove that and take care of it. You can't really preach gospel where there is an unrepentant heart. All that heart gets is law.

At the end of Job's trial with God, he wanted an explanation - to pierce the veil - to know why it had happened to him when he'd been so good. "Where were you, God said, when I set the stars? Besides, if you're so bad, can you mess with Leviathan, the sea monster, the dragon with armor?" Who is Leviathan? Satan. You think you're match for him? If you're going to dine with darkness, your own darkness... "Well, if people knew about me, they'd hate me." They already know about you if they have the Holy Ghost. The only reason they don't tell you is because there's no point in it because you really don't want to hear. Besides, it may not be their time. "How are my kids doing in school?" Children don't look so innocent now. This is also about your hidden sin, your darkness, you dishonoring your parents, and you being continually being curved in on yourself. You have your reward. God may let you keep doing it another 10 years, until finally it's just out there. You finally did what you've been harboring in your heart, and now everyone sees it. You can't hide it.

Psalm 107:5-6 (KJV) Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. [6] Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

Who cries to the Lord? Anyone whose heart is overwhelmed. Anyone that loves their children. They have a relationship with God and they walk before God and not men. If you love your wife you'll walk before God and not men. You have to understand how the Lord works. Sometimes he gives you a lot of rope.

Psalm 107:7-9 (KJV) And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. [8] Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! [9] For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst. No hunger, no thirst, no blessed.

Psalm 107:10-11 (KJV) Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; [11] Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

Ever known anyone like that?

Psalm 107:11-12 (KJV) Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: [12] Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.

Oh, oh! Bad God! He is bad. In fact, let me tell you how bad he is: He allows people to die of cancer. He allows children to die. I won't be there in your death for you, and you for me. Prepare that death would have no dominion over you and you would not fear death.

Psalm 107:13 (KJV) Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

When they're brought down they cried to the Lord. Take heed if you think you stand, least you fall. Great was the fall of the house.

Some people are so busy and like it that way so they don't have to think about God. If Christ, the Living Word, shows up in you, you will be an interruption and you'll know it. Who is Martha? You, me, the church - half of her.

Psalm 107:14-15 (KJV) He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. [15] Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psalm 107:17 (KJV) Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

Sinners are fools. There is so much in this. There is a continual back and forth. They end up in a wilderness, fearful, filled with cares, taking thought for their lives, for tomorrow, and how

they're going to look - making sure they make a good image - vanity.

Psalm 107:43 (KJV) Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Observe means to look at. Have you exhausted the meaning of it? What does it do? To regard something, see and know, keep and preserve, practice and learn from. Who is wise, who will observe, who will watch, who will learn from this story? You don't believe that you're going to end up in a desert and that is why you're spaced out, and think that your life can go on being one of cheeseburgers. Woody Allen, he was thinking of committing suicide, and then he remembered this delicatessen that had these amazing Corned Beef sandwiches.

I'm talking about something - life eternal.

Psalm 107:43 (KJV) Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.

They will understand the covenant of God that He has made with the Church. He says some things to the Church. Some people take things like, "I'll never leave you or forsake you," and think they can keep on sinning.

The un-preached God in your house is hardly distinguishable from the devil. He's a God that kills. He's a God that makes poor. Anyone poor today and can't pay your bills? Who are you getting help from? Who are you talking to? "Don't make my problem worse by telling me about it. I feel bad enough." You don't feel bad at all.

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

Ps 73:14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning

David said, And I was envious of the people who don't have any problems, and aren't bothered by their sins or by walking before men and not God. I got envious of them, and then I went into the temple, the church, I saw how foolish I was an ignorant. I was a beast before thee.

God gives grace to the humble.

That is all law.

What is then our life, since that's law?

Romans 5:1-3 (KJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: [2] By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

Do you glory in tribulations? Anfechtung means tribulations. Daily anfechtung is coming your way, behind that is the devil. But only until the Lord comes and does away with it. Tomorrow you will wake up and you'll forget and it won't take that long. It's like the slough of despondency. You try to put God's good Word in it and it is just a waste, unless the Holy Ghost is there. Or put it like this; it's manna. By tomorrow morning it will turn into worms and maggots, particularly when men co-opt it, unless the Holy Ghost, unless there's a man in this Church who cries out, "Son of David! Have mercy on me!", and you're brought to that.

Romans 5:3-5 (KJV) And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [4] And patience, experience; and experience, hope: [5] And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Hope in whom? Not the person you've hoped in your whole life. It's hope in Christ. Anyone who is still trying to make a name, still cruising through the hamburger stand with your beautiful hair blowing... Tell the truth, girls! You've already been had. Boys! You're still ashamed. Don't worry; God has a thing called tribulation. I'm not even talking to anyone under 18, 19, or 23.

Romans 6:1 (KJV) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

"I've got some Reformation theology now and I can continue in sin." Here's the big argument and I don't know if this will make any sense to you. Col. 3:1-2 (KJV) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. [2] Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Does this mean metaphysical things above? No. Christ and your neighbor. Here's the argument: Col. 3:3 (KJV) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Can you remember that? Ye are dead. What does that mean? It means this; it means that this Christian life, and this is the Christian life right here, by the mercy of God, by the grace of

God, you've been crucified with Christ in God, and it is no longer you who live. It doesn't matter how long you've sung this – it is true. What does it mean if you're dead? Let me say this: In Luther's theology the Christian life is passive. It means your life is passive. I looked that word up and in the Latin definitions, and it's interesting for you English student, it means noting a voice, a grammatical voice, the infliction of the verb, namely, he, she, or it is carried. Passive means he, she, or it is carried, affected by some external force. You're dead. The life you now live you live by the faith of the Son of God that died for you, and gave Himself for you. This has the greatest implications of anything you're ever going to hear. Being the object of the action rather than the subject, or rather than the cause of the action, you are the object of the action. As opposed to acting, it is reception or receiving as characterized by receiving. You're produced or caused by some external agency, receiving, submitting, enduring, without resistance. Passive does not mean that you're inert, although some definitions would seem to indicate that. There is no one more active in the world than Christ. They are dead and it is not them that are acting, but Christ. The passive life is very active. The new creation is very active, but it is Christ.

It is God that worketh in you. It is God that worketh in you because it couldn't be you. It is God in you that fulfills the law, that loves your neighbor, that doesn't think evil. It is God in you - Christ in you, the hope of glory. The old man can never glorify God because he wants to do things to bring glory to himself. But when you're dead, what can you do? You can - he that is dead is freed from the law. What do you mean we're free from the law, that's all we've heard today? The old creation will always be under the law, but we don't look to that, we look to Christ. There's no point in challenging me. That won't help. That just puts more death on your children. Go ahead though. When will your sins weigh on you? "Son of David, have mercy on me. I've got a vexed son. He can't even talk. He's fearful. He's got a dirty little mind. He doesn't go near any Word of God." "Well it's not my fault." Yeah it is! Blame me!

If God weighs lightly on you; don't worry.

Isaiah 28:14 (KJV) Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 28:14-15 (KJV) Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. [15] Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall

not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

We're going to avoid affliction, tribulation and poverty. The Lord kills and makes alive. The Lord makes poor and makes rich. You'll not hear about this from the television. In their hearts they were liars.

Isaiah 28:15-16 (KJV) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

[16] Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

The builders reject this stone all the time. He is despised and rejected. When did you despise him?

Isaiah 28:21-22 (KJV) For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. [22] Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

Isaiah 28:23 (KJV) Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

God's strange work His alien work, is anfechtung. There's no escape. Behind the anfechtung is He that worketh in you, if that is what you need. You can't even believe or receive Christ. All you can do is say, "Forgive me, Lord, as I forgive others."

The passive life, the Christian lives in a passiveness. This means that God is the active subject, and the Christian is the object. It is passive in the sense that it suffers and undergoes God's work and passively receives God's work.

Reckon yourselves dead. .

On Being A Theologian of the Cross, Page 86

What is meant by suffering here? It seems obvious that Luther does not mean just physical pain. He himself experienced much excruciating pain during his life, but never to my knowledge does he identify that pain with the suffering worked by the cross or use it to make claims for himself as a sufferer. For Luther the sufferings of the spirit, the pangs of conscience

(If you don't have pangs of conscience, you might want to consider that you're a sociopath. If someone is asked are you forgiven, and they say "I hope so." More law - reprove them), the terrors of temptation (Anfechtungen), were always more agonizing and serious than the physical pain he also knew well. Even physical death, though heartrending enough for loved ones, was a far lesser matter than the kind of death experienced when the wrath of God assaults the sinner.

So the suffering Luther has in mind first and foremost is the result of God's operation on the sinner. One can find reference to that throughout his writings. The suffering Luther has in mind is something God inflicts on us just by virtue of the fact that he moves against the presumption of our works. He is out to do it all. We suffer this unilateral action of God. We suffer because we don't like it. We don't like to be put out of control. It means that we are rendered totally passive by the divine operation through the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

"Passive" has, of course, become something of a bad word in contemporary speech. It is taken to mean lack of assertiveness, lack of motivation, lack of care, extreme lassitude. But we should recall that it comes from the same root as "passion" and means literally the same thing as suffering – as in "the passion of our Lord." Luther used it constantly to describe the proper disposition of the sinner to the grace of God. Precisely because the sinner has taken up an active position in relation to God's activity on the basis of works, God's action over against the sinner can only result in suffering. The sinner I therefore rendered absolutely passive, put totally out of commission, we might say today. The sinner can only suffer the divine action.

Psalm 107 - all these things happened, and then they cried out. They hardened their hearts

Luther: "The soul is taken hold of [by the pure Word of God] and does not take hold of anything itself; that is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations, and is taken away by the Word...into the wilderness...to invisible things, into the vineyard, and into the marriage chamber. But this leading, this taking away, and this stripping, miserably tortures [the soul].

How many of you are under God's divine operation today? Don't think it strange. God's ways are different, aren't they?

That is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations, and is taken away by the Word...into the wilderness...to invisible things, into

the vineyard, and into the marriage chamber. But this leading, this taking away, and this stripping, miserably tortures [the soul].

What? You're stripping me of that now, again today? How many of you have been stripped of all you knew yet? How many of you have been stripped of valuing what you knew? If you love someone you'll be stripped from what you know of how they are even. If you're blaming, you need to be stripped of blame. "Yeah. It's their fault I'm that way." "Harold, try growing up!" You could have done works in your parents. They're still here, aren't they? It isn't easy.

That is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations,

What's in there? He is there - the Groom - and He's got things for the bride.

But this leading, this taking away, and this stripping, miserably tortures [the soul]. For it is a hard path to walk in,

If your parents are still here walking this path, you ought to give thanks to God.

For it is a hard path to walk in, and a straight and narrow way, to leave all visible things, to be stripped of all natural senses and ideas, and to be led out of all those things to which we have been accustomed; this, indeed, is to die, and to descend into hell.

That is what dying is. Your natural gifts, abilities and knowledge.

this, indeed, is to die, and to descend into hell. To experience hell.

The very indignation and resentment we harbor and/or express when we come up against the absolutely sovereign action of God in these matters indicates the truth of what is being said. The anger and the indignation is the beginning of the suffering! Like Job we protest against God. Why? Because in actual suffering all theorizing is over. One enters into contention with God.

One thing the Church in America has lost is the prayer of complaint. Get it out there! Complaint is great prayer. Not complaining to your wife - it's complaining to God. Why? Reb Tivia knew what was behind everything, at least. He reasoned it out. If there's any mischief being played on you today, it could be the devil. Satan is God's servant.

One enters into contention with God. Precisely in his rash protest over his suffering Job unwittingly speaks the truth about God. In his suffering he cries out to God as the ultimate

answer to it all. As with job, it is only through suffering that sinners come to know and speak such truth. As inveterate theologians of glory, we are bound to shy away from such truth and, like job's friends, try to make excuses for God. We adjust our doctrine of God to fit our glory projects.

So God declares (Job 42:7-9) that Jo had spoken the truth, terrifying as it was and is. Job now sees that in the voice of his suffering he had unwittingly spoken the truth, and he is terrified by it: "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know (42:3). Job sees that through suffering the truth had literally been wrung out of him. He sees where previously he had heard and complained. He thus despises himself and repents in dust and ashes."

So, are you suffering the work of God today, and every day? The alien work of God? God kills the old Adam and gives him a new heart and causes Adam to hear and believe. People who believe enter into God's rest, and have ceased from their work. Jesus Christ is now working in them. If you need a little *anfechtung*, you can count on God and you might have to suffer that unilateral action. On the other hand, Christ has shed abroad in your heart His love. This is daily. Tomorrow you will get up and all it will be for you is Monday, until you're baptized, or until this word, or the *anfechtung* comes upon you. "Well, I know how to get around this problem and that problem." Good.

He gives you a new heart, a new spirit, and new mind. Christian righteousness is passive, and is entirely opposed to the world's righteousness which is active. We can only receive the righteousness of God. We can't earn it. We do not work, but let another work in us. We do not work, but let another work in us. I'll say it again; We do not work, but let another work in us and through us. We are no longer the subject we've been talking about our whole life. Now we are the object of God's action and now He is the only subject worthy of talk. He is the initiator of all the action, the one who fulfills every word, and the one who is active in the verbs - do this and do that. When you read Scripture through the eyes of law and gospel, you'll see that it is glorious. This is right down to the gut level - where we live. We receive this.

We let another work in us, namely God. This cannot be understood by the world. They don't have the grammar to understand this. God hides things from the wise. They're too wise to get this. This is foolishness. It is the preaching of the cross. You are dead. Now that you're dead, what do you want to do? You can't even want. How can I want to do good or bad if I'm dead? Reckon yourselves dead to sin but alive to Christ. "Well, I just got angry and kicked my dog."

Confess it and move on. "God you're right in your judgment, and your anfechtung, in my life. But I don't want to be left alone."

Why did the Children of Israel wander in the desert for 40 years? God wanted to show them what was in their hearts. They never would have believed it in 20 years. You still hope in your own heart? How many years is it going to take?

We receive this righteousness. We do not work but let another work in us. It is he that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. His pleasure is much better for you than yours. The wise and prudent only want to make something of themselves - self-made people.

Faith is the victory. Trying hard isn't not what we're into. Not at all. We are into being dead, not trying to get dead - being dead.

By the way, even faith is total gift. How do you know? It comes by hearing. Romans 10:17 (KJV) So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us all the time.

When you read Psalm 107, or you read the history of Israel and their suffering, and read about David, realize that they've gone ahead of you. You may not have to experience that. God does give back the years the locust ate. Faith. Faith - that gift. We live entirely in that gift. How did you get faith? Hearing. How did you hear? A voice outside of me. What caused your hear to hear? Tribulation - suffering the work of God. Is God working in you today? Will He work in you tomorrow? Will you suffer his working in you? Why is it called suffering? It is passion - passive. Something outside of you comes in - God's work. Isn't that amazing?

Our suffering, think it not strange. God is conforming you to His image. You know what? There is progress - not total progress in this life. We will always have a flesh, but where you're going - heaven - it is our home. In the meantime, while we're here, imagine saying, "We boast and glory in our tribulation because we know what it works." Israel got thirsty in the wilderness, and God did it. Why? To show them what was in their hearts. They had just seen this great miracle. They thought Pharaoh was this great dude. He had chariots and horses and 100,000 soldiers, and was pretty heavy. He did put up with 9 plagues. How heavy do you think you want to be? Through faith you can say, "Amen, Lord Jesus. Come to me. Maranatha me, right now. Let the explosion start in my heart. Let the abundance flow out. Let Christ flow out. Let every heart receive. Let every heart prepare room through the mercy and grace of

God." By the way, this is what He is doing, and He is answering your prayers. We are not active in this. That the city set on the hill, the righteousness of God would be seen in the entire world.

Luther's favorite saying - Little flock. He saw enough of the big administration - management - control - works. So make sure that works follow you wherever you go, right? Whose works will they be? His works. You can pretend, but you can't trick the Lord. Jacob wasn't done with him at Jabbac, because Jacob wasn't done. He was still playing games, holding onto Benjamin. God wants everything, and He's serious about that. You can't do it. Here's the marvelous thing: When the law tells you to do this, you are to immediately confess your utter inability to do it, believe Christ has already done it, and that it is finished. What more do you want than that? Maybe you could find a better deal somewhere else. Just because you're not hearing it doesn't mean it is not yours.

Because of what Christ has done. I'm declaring to you the forgiveness of all of your sins. I pray to God that you would receive it and not try to do anything about it. I forgive you all of your sins, in the name of Jesus, not in my name. There is not one sin that you have, that Christ hasn't cleansed.

Here's the tragedy, before you go: The blood of the Lamb takes away the sins of the whole world. Let Him tell people, speak the gospel, let the world know, through you, through your tongue. He will meet your neighbor's ultimate need through your tongue, but it will be His gospel.

AMEN

SOURCE

Sermon Notes – Don O'Connor – 8/17/08

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)